

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 00050 030316Z

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ACTION EB-07

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TO USDA/FAS/WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9486

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FOR PETTIPAW/IMD/L&LP/FMD/FAS

SUBJECT: CATTLE IMPORT CONTROVERSY

TOFAS 1.

1. DURING THE PAST WEEK THERE HAS APPEARED IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS A RUNNING COMMENTARY REGARDING THE CONTROVERSIAL IMPORTATION OF 285 HEAD OF SUPPOSEDLY PUREBRED BRAHMAN CATTLE FROM THE U.S. LAST JUNE. THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS LEADING UP TO PRESENT.

2. ON FEBRUARY 11, 1974 THE BUREAU OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY CONDUCTED A PUBLIC BIDDING FOR THE SUPPLY OF 30 PUREBRED, 2-3 YEAR OLD BRAHMAN BULLS AND 300 PUREBRED, 2-3 YEAR OLD HEIFERS. A TOTAL OF 285 HEAD OF HEIFERS WERE ACTUALLY PURCHASED AT A COST OF P3,045,225 (\$435,655). FIVE REGISTERED BULLS WERE ALSO PURCHASED BUT ARE NOT PART OF THE CONTROVERSY. LOW BID WAS SUBMITTED BY A FRANCISCO NICOLAS. PURCHASE WAS MADE THROUGH MICHELSON LIVESTOCK INTERNATIONAL OF BOSTON.

3. FOLLOWING APPROVAL BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND MALACANANG, THE BAI SENT DR. ANDRES T. PEROS, CHIEF OF LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY, BAI, TO THE UNITED STATES TO INSPECT, SELECT AND ACCEPT PUREBRED BRAHMAN CATTLE. (DR. PEROS HAS JUST RECENTLY BEEN SUSPENDED FROM HIS POSITION PENDING FINAL OUTCOME OF AN INVESTIGATION CURRENTLY UNDERWAY).

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 MANILA 00050 030316Z

4. THE BAI ESTABLISHED A COMMITTEE ON JUNE 3 TO INSPECT AND ACCEPT THE ANIMALS. THE COMMITTEE APPARENTLY REPORTED THAT EXCEPT FOR PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, MOST OF THE ANIMALS WERE NOT PUREBRED AMERICAN BRAHMAN CATTLE. (OF THE 285 HEAD IMPORTED, 228 WERE DEFINITELY CROSSBRED ANIMALS, 46 WERE QUESTIONABLE DUE TO LACK OF REGISTRATION PAPERS, AND 11 DIED). BASED ON THE COMMITTEE REPORT, DR. PEDRO G. REFUERZO, DIRECTOR OF BAI, PERSONALLY INSPECTED THE ANIMALS ON JULY 23-24, CONFIRMED THE COMMITTEE FINDINGS AND SO REPORTED TO SEC. OF AGRICULTURE TANCO. SEC. TANCO SUBSEQUENTLY ORDERED A FULL-SCALE INVESTIGATION WHICH HAS NOT YET BEEN COMPLETED.

5. AGATTAHCE COMMENTS. U.S. EXPORT DATA CONFIRMS THE QUANTITY AND VALUE OF THE ANIMALS AND EXCEPT FOR THE VALUE OF THE PUREBRED BULLS, IT SEEMS TO BE A HIGH PRICE TO PAY FOR CROSSBRED HEIFERS. AVERAGE FOB PRICE WAS \$13,200 PER HEAD FOR BULLS AND \$1,155 FOR HEIFERS.

6. AGATTAHCE HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT INTENTION WAS TO BUY ONLY A FEW PUREBRED ANIMALS FROM THE U.S. MOST WERE TO BE PROCURED FROM LOCAL PUREBRED, BUT NOT REGISTERED, HERDS.

7. AS FAR AS THE AGATTAHCE CAN DETERMINE, THERE IS NOTHING TO INDICATE THAT ANYONE IN THE U.S. IS INVOLVED IN THE CONTROVERSY. WHETHER THE PRICES PAID WERE REASONABLE, IT WAS AN HONEST MISTAKE, POOR JUDGMENT WAS EXERCISED, OR A PAYOFF MADE REMAINS TO BE DETERMINED.

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